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## **Media Release**

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### **1500 hours of painstaking work with several thousand parts make a working Silver Swan**

After more than 1500 hours of painstaking work carried out by specialist horologists, The Bowes Museum's iconic 250 year old life size Silver Swan, the only one in the world, is set to wow audiences once again as she comes back to life in her true form for the first time in four years.

Visitors to the Barnard Castle Museum can again be mesmerized on a daily basis by the Silver Swan's majestic movements as she swims, prims and feeds herself on a flowing glass stream accompanied by music from 2pm on Tuesday, 19 March.

The intricate restoration and conservation project was carried out by experts from the Cumbria Clock Company, assisted by clocks interns from West Dean College in Sussex and Birmingham School of Jewellery alongside the Museum's in-house conservation team. Students from the conservation course at Lincoln University also observed and were able to add to their learning from the restoration process.

The Silver Swan is a solid silver replica of a female swan and one of the finest examples of 18th century automata in the world. An automaton is a clockwork designed to replicate real life. It was made in the workshop of James Cox in London and was first shown in his museum in 1773. It has three clockwork mechanisms and contains more than 2,000 moving parts, with several thousand in its whole.

Visitors have been able to observe much of the restoration and conservation work being carried out in the Silver Swan gallery.

Keith Scobie-Youngs, the Director of the Cumbria Clock Company said:

"It's been a real privilege to work on such a historic object as the Silver Swan that means such a great deal to so many people. It's been incredible to get an insight into the workings of the clock makers of the past and see how so many of the skills they possessed are still relevant today and to have been able to pass on that knowledge to a new generation of clockmakers and horologists has been incredibly humbling."

Victoria Franka was appointed as the Silver Swan artist in residence while the conservation work was taking place. The multidisciplinary mixed media artist, led 10 workshops

throughout her residency where she shared her skills and expertise with visitors. The work she created, which includes two macrame wall hangings, a 3D printed wallhanging and a zoetrope (spinning animation) can also be seen in the Silver Swan gallery.

The project was funded by a grant of £146,324.00 from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, money from The Friends of The Bowes Museum, The Leche Trust, The Aurelius Charitable Trust, The Circles of Art and the generosity of people who gave £20,375.00 to a Crowdfunding Campaign as well as private donors.

Visitors will be able to enjoy the Silver Swan performing once a day at 2pm from Tuesday, 19th of March 2024 at The Bowes Museum in Barnard Castle. The Museum is open from 10am to 5pm daily.

Notes to editors:

You can download some images of the Silver Swan here.

[Silver Swan](#)

Please credit these ©Silver Swan, The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle

The Bowes Museum is a charity managing a Grade 1 listed accredited museum and Grade 2 listed parkland in Barnard Castle. Founded by Joséphine & John Bowes 150+ years ago, this purpose-built Museum brings together an extraordinary, Designated collection of European fine and decorative art as a cultural resource for the people of Northern England, where today we celebrate artists, designers and makers.

The Bowes Museum receives funding from Durham County Council and, as a National Portfolio Organisation, receives support from Arts Council England. Arts Council England is the national development body for arts and culture across England, working to enrich people's lives.

[www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

The Bowes Museum is a member of the Discover Durham partnership of attractions, whose commitment is to promote Durham as an exciting and vibrant group travel destination and to provide the travel trade with a professional and knowledgeable service.  
discoverdurham.co.uk

Admission to The Bowes Museum is £13.50 for local members (residents of County Durham and Darlington), £15.50 for members (residents elsewhere), £18.00 for a day ticket, £19.80 for a day ticket including gift aid. Under 18s, full time students and carers are free.

As a registered charity (number 1079639) we need to generate more than half of our income each year to care for our historic collection, buildings and parkland. Your donations are vital to our work. Visit <https://thebowesmuseum.org.uk/support/> for more information.

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